

**IRREDENTISM
AND
PROVOCATION,**

**A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY
OF GERMAN MINORITY IN POLAND**

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Edited by Andrzej Leśniewski

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FROM THE EDITOR

After the defeat of Germany in the First World War it seemed that nothing would stand in the way of putting an end to German eastward expansion. Poland and Czechoslovakia had recovered their independence, a system of international security was built up which was expected to ensure peace in the world. The Victorious Powers believed that the decisions adopted at Versailles would suffice to protect the states of Central Europe from any new aggression on the part of Germany. However, so many errors were committed that this belief became nothing more than an elusive hope.

The frontiers established at Versailles had placed Poland in a strategically hopeless position exposing her to the possibility of a German attack from three sides. Poland's prospects in the social and economic field were seriously impeded by her being separated from Gdańsk—her only seaport and by the division of Upper Silesia.

The European system of security—an uneasy compromise between President Wilson's idealistic concepts, and the cynical doctrine of *Realpolitik*—never in fact came into being.

Moreover the importance of a problem had been underestimated,—namely the role played in Germany's eastward expansion by the groups of Germans domiciled in the various states of Central and South-Eastern Europe,—the full significance of which was to be realized only twenty years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

The Powers behind the Versailles Treaty were apparently unaware of the danger created by millions of Germans living

dispersed throughout Central and South-Eastern Europe; furthermore, they created conditions which aggravated this danger by granting these German populations special rights and by giving them a feeling of exclusiveness, if not superiority. This is how the problem of the German minorities came into being and it immediately became a useful pawn in the hands of German statesmen speculating on the possibility of bringing about the revision of the Treaty of Versailles.

The political opportunities offered by "the protection of Germans abroad" were realized already by Stresemann, who ranked them second only to the question of reparations in the foreign policy of the Weimar Republic.*

But as long as internal political relations in Germany depended on inter-party friction the chauvinism of German minority groups in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe was sapped by the existence of the same disputes and rivalries between the right wing and centre parties as those that were going on between the respective parties at home.

The seizure of power by Hitler definitely cast the role of the German minorities as the centres of irredentism and as the bridgeheads of future aggression. This was the period during which the states of Central and South-Eastern Europe became growingly aware of the existence of a new body within their midst—the "Fifth Column" whose activities were to bear so tragically on the fate of these countries a few years hence.

National-Socialist ideology released among the German minorities their nationalistic inclinations, excluded them from any obligation of loyalty towards the domiciliary country and induced them to play the important part assigned to them in Hitler's aggressive plans. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary became the theatres of operations in which members of the German minority took an active part in fighting

* Letter to the Crown Prince dated September 27, 1925.

for establishment of German hegemony over Europe. Fictitious persecutions allegedly suffered by the German minorities became the arguments deliberately used by Hitler in order to supply the motive for his war offensive in Europe. It is generally known how well the Sudeten Germans played their role as Czechoslovakia's grave-diggers. In Poland and Yugoslavia the German minorities discharged its Fifth Column duties by opening up the road to the advancing German forces.

We must however emphasize that the anti-state, subversive activities of the German minority groups in the countries of Central Europe and particularly in Czechoslovakia and Poland, were not of Nazi origin. The nationalism of the German minority had been a destructive element since the very dawn of our independence.

"... the influence of nationalism on Polish-German relations has been entirely poisonous. This is why after the restoration of Poland in 1918, one failed to transform the German minority into a factor in support of the existence of the young republic as a state."*

It is therefore hardly surprising that the experiences of the 20 inter-war years: irredentism, the "Fifth Column" and later the activities of the *Volksdeutsche* during the occupation,—lay at the base of the solutions proposed during war-time by the Allied Powers when they discussed plans for a post-war European settlement. They agreed almost unanimously upon the necessity for the transference to Germany of the German populations from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Transylvania. Already in the spring of 1943, President Roosevelt put forward the suggestion that Germans should be removed from territories that were to be returned to Poland, adding "... in any circumstances, the Prussians cannot be trusted." After further

* Mary v. Puttkamer, *Die Welt* of April 11, 1958, report on the conference of West-German historians.

discussions it was resolved to remove the German population from the whole of Poland within her new post-war frontiers. The Allied statesmen agreed that this operation—painful as it might be for the German population involved—was nevertheless a necessity and a unique opportunity of removing once and for all, one of the main causes of conflict in this part of Europe. Concern for security and peace in Europe lay at the foundation of these decisions.

Chapter XIII of the Potsdam Agreement supplied the legal basis for a complete transference to Germany of the German populations from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The plan for the transfer was approved by the Allied Control Council for Germany by its decision dated November 20, 1945. Over the period 1946—1948 the governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia and the Control Commission for Hungary with the active co-operation of the Allied Powers implemented the transference plan, thereby putting an end to the era of Germany's eastward expansion, which had lasted one thousand years. The territories recovered by Poland became rapidly populated by Poles, of whom a considerable proportion came from territory beyond the river Bug.

* * *

The particular German interpretation of the "right to self-determination" in concrete conditions of the between-the-wars period, adapted for the German minorities living in the neighbouring countries has called to life the *Volksgruppenrecht*—the legal base for the irredentism and provocation.

The crowning point in the "determination" or rather in the abuse of the principles of self-determination was the partition of Czechoslovakia. The famous speech of Hitler at the *Parteitag* in Nuremberg in 1938 (the final speech on September 12) being the prologue to Munich was on the subject of the "right to self-determination of the Sudeten Germans."

In this way the "right to self-determination" born by the French Revolution as the defence against tyranny and developed during the World War I as the weapon against imperialism has been transformed by the Germans—politicians and lawyers—into the weapon of the German imperialism.

In spite of this abuse "the right of nations to self-determination" did not lose its political and legal strength and became one of the basic political principle regulating the post-war order.

What more, just because the breaking by Germany of the right of nations to self-existence and sometimes even to existence at all was the prologue and substance of the World War II, the right to self-determination of nations has been recognized as one of the foundations of the "relations among nations" and as a "means to strengthen universal peace" (Art. 1 p. 2 of the Charter of the United Nations).

To those principles are referring today the Germans as to the foundation of the *Recht auf die Heimat* in spite of the fact that the transfer of German minorities out of the neighbouring countries has been decided by the Allied Powers in course of preparations for the establishment of the post-war European order.

The decision to transfer the German minorities was not a parallel decision but derivative in relation to other principles of the post-war order and first of all in relation to the principle of self-determination.

Recht auf die Heimat is a formula constructed to substantiate the return of the German minorities, in other words of the German irredentism to the territories of the neighbouring countries. For that reason using the "right of self-determination" to substantiate the *Recht auf die Heimat* constitutes the same abuse as the construction of the formula *Volksgruppenrecht* in the past, constitutes an effort to utilize for the purposes of the German imperialism the same principles which have been established to defend the European nations before the same imperialism.

Decisions as weighty as those made after the Second World War, were made to last. We know them to be final, both in the intention of those who made them and in the interests of peace. The states of Central and South-Eastern Europe, including Poland have not the least wish to see another Henlein or some such "German minority leader" spring up again from their soil...

THE GERMAN FIFTH COLUMN IN POLAND IN 1939

by

RESTYTUT STANIEWICZ

"When I wage war ... troops will suddenly appear, let us say, in Paris. They will wear French uniforms. They will march through the streets in broad daylight. No one will stop them... They will march to the headquarters of the General Staff. They will occupy the ministries, the Chamber of Deputies... But I shall long have had relations with the men who will form a new government—a government to suit me.

"We shall find such men, we shall find them in every country. ... We shall have enough volunteers, men like our SA, trustworthy and ready for any sacrifice. We shall send them across the border in peace time. ... Our strategy, ... is to destroy the enemy from within, to conquer him through himself."

(Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler speaks*, London 1940, pp. 17—18).

Despite the fact that twenty years have already passed since the tragic Summer and Autumn months of 1939, the bitter memory and indignation felt at the attitude of the German minority in Poland during those days is still very much alive among the Poles. One of the main reasons for the unexpected and speedy defeat of the Polish armies was, in the generally shared opinion of wide circles of the Polish public, the treason of Germans—Polish citizens, and the activity of German spies and diversionists, everything that was described then in one pointed term—the Fifth Column. It is not surprising therefore that the confrontation of this conviction with the thesis propagated today by West-German historians and publicists has aroused strong opposition to these thesis and the desire to establish true picture of historical facts.

The history of the German minority in Poland in the period between the First and the Second World Wars has already been the subject of a considerable number of studies and monographs by West-German historians. The general tendency dominating these studies, however, is a one-sided picture of "German loyalty" and of alleged "Polish persecutions." West-German historians are presenting a warped view of the real influence national socialism had on the German minority in the years 1933—1939 and are passing over in silence or carefully masking the existence of the far reaching links between the German minority organizations in Poland and the authorities of the Third Reich. According to their thesis the activity of the German Fifth Column in Poland in 1939 was the invention of Polish propaganda or, at best, the result of the then generally prevailing Fifth Column psychosis.¹ All this is intended to serve as historical substantiation for the so-called *Recht auf die Heimat* (the right to the homeland) and for the demand for the return of the Germans to the Polish Western and Northern Territories.²

It is necessary, in such a situation, to discuss objectively and concretely the problem of the Fifth Column in Poland, which constituted the key point of the history of the German minority in Poland in the years 1933—1939. First of all, however, we should define the precise meaning of the term Fifth Column.

An expert on this subject, the Dutch historian Louis De Jong gives in his book the following definition:

"Any group outside national socialist Germany was considered to belong to the German Fifth Column, which consciously, and in agreement with secret instructions from German authorities, sponsored activities to further Germany's territorial expansion."³

Within the frames of this definition De Jong distinguishes the political Fifth Column (undermining and destroying the countries from inside in peacetime, by political methods) and the military one (active support of the military aggression).

Applying this definition to Polish conditions, two separate, although closely connected problems should be distinguished: (1) the problem of the political and social development of the German minority in the years 1933—1939 and (2) the problem of German diversion in 1939. This article will deal mainly with the second problem but in order to correctly understand the problems of the German military Fifth Column in Poland it is necessary to give a brief account of the historical and sociological background resulting from the general development of the German minority since 1933.

Already in the years 1919—1932 the development of minority and Polish-German inter-state relations did not create a favourable basis for harmonious co-operation between the German minority and the Polish majority within the frames of the revived Polish state. Strong irredentist tendencies were alive among the German living in the territories formerly occupied by Prussia. These tendencies were supported and instigated by the German government in Berlin.⁴ Simultaneously, the integration of Germans from three post-partition provinces was taking place under the influence of the conservative and extreme nationalist German ideology which was, in a certain sense, the ideological precursor of national socialism. An important role was played here by the historical conditions and the social structure of the German minority consisting for the most part of bourgeois, middle class and rich farmer elements and lacking, apart from Upper Silesia and Łódź, major workers' concentrations.⁵

The victory of national socialism in Germany in January 1933 resulted in further aggravation of Polish-German relations. The German minority in Poland, particularly in the western voivodships, saw in this an announcement of the early abolishment of the Treaty of Versailles and of the return to the 1914 frontiers. The disquiet among the Germans was accompanied by a considerable uneasiness of the Polish population and the governmental circles even considered the possibility of

a preventive war against Germany. In this situation Hitler suddenly changed his policy and this led to the conclusion in January 1934, of the Polish German non-aggression pact which was intended to gain time and secure the neutrality of Poland in the event of eventual conflict with the West. Acting in accordance with his long-term policy, Hitler was even disposed to temporarily suspend his anti-Polish revisionist propaganda and to make certain concessions regarding minority problems. In the general atmosphere of Polish-German rapprochement and to the accompaniment of declarations on the complete loyalty of the German minority towards the Polish state, an action was started to "unify" this minority in the spirit of national socialism and to subordinate it to the leadership of the *NSDAP* in the *Reich*.⁶

The course of events in Germany resulted in a rapid increase in the influence of the orthodox Nazi organization — *Jung-deutsche Partei für Polen (JDP)*. After initial opposition, the nationalist bourgeois organizations: *Deutsche Vereinigung (DV)* in Pomerania and Poznań region, *Deutscher Volksbund (DVB)* in Upper Silesia and the *Deutscher Volksverband (DVV)* in central Poland soon accepted the national-socialist ideology. Three factors played an essential role in this easy nazification of German organizations in Poland: (1) the enthusiastic disposition of the masses and particularly of the German youth towards Nazism, (2) the political and financial ties of the German organizations in Poland with numerous government and social institutions in the *Reich*, consolidated already in the twenties and (3) the liberal policy of the Polish authorities being the logical consequence of the non-aggression pact and resulting from that pact the improvement of Polish-German relations.

In spite of the basic political and ideological unity, it came to a strong competitive fight between the most radical *JDP* and the conservative leaders of *DV*, *DVB* and *DVV*, grouped in the superior co-ordinating organization *Rat der Deutschen in Polen* (Council of the Germans in Poland). The efforts towards

unification, undertaken a number of times, produced positive results and the fight between the "young" and the "old" was, during the next few years, the basic element of the political life of the German minority in Poland, duplicating to a certain degree the internal friction and strife in the *NSDAP* leadership. Contrary to the initial anticipations of the Polish side, this fight intensified the activity of the German minority and the number of competing groups. Out of almost 800,000 Germans living in Poland in 1937, 150,000—200,000 were already associated in political organizations of both fractions of the Nazi camp. At the same time the German anti- Nazi elements of the *Deutsche Sozialistische Arbeitspartei* and *Deutsche Christliche Volkspartei* had been quickly ostracized from the social life of the "national group" and branded as "deserters of the German cause"⁷.

The increase in importance and strength of the Nazi camp was the external symptom of deep sociological and psychological processes which resulted in a progressive alienation of the German minority from the social and political structure of the Polish state and in a constant increase in their consciousness of strong liaison with the Third Reich. These processes were materially supported by a well developed network of German social, economic, professional, cultural and educational organizations covering all aspects of life of the German minority group and controlled by the German political organizations. This network of organizations, having considerable financial support from the Third Reich caused the overwhelming majority of Germans in Poland to be economically dependent on them and was changing more and more into something of a German state within a state, connected by many ties with the authorities of the Third Reich and acting in accordance with instructions received from there.

The German documents brought to light after the war confirm the fact that the Nazi organizations in Poland were in constant, confidential touch with Berlin.⁸ A number of party and government institutions were engaged in directing and financing

these organizations, for instance the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA), *Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP* (AO), *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VOMI) and the *Auswärtiges Amt* with the subordinated credit institutions *Deutsche Stiftung* and the *Vereinigte Finanzkontore*. The role of contact centres in Poland was played by the German consulates, the legal cells of the AO NSDAP and the illegal underground network of the NSDAP. The closer the ties with the Reich became, the more negligible grew the differences between the two fractions of the Nazi camp and the fight between them was becoming more and more fictitious. At the same time the *Sicherheitsdienst*, *Abwehr* and the special intelligence department of the AO, the so-called *Hafendienst*, were ever more intensively using individuals and groups from among the German minority for the aims of the political and military intelligence.⁹

In such a situation conflicts between the Polish authorities and the leaders of the German minority began to multiply considerably in the years 1936—1937. This was due on the one hand to the fact that the Polish side realized the dangerous results brought about by the tolerant policy of the past years and on the other hand by the increasingly pertinacious accusations brought forward by the German side against the Polish Government. The leaders of the Nazi camp brought forward for the first time the demand for the granting to the "German national group" of special legal status (the so-called *Volksgruppenrecht* sanctioning thereby the above described social and political process of separatism. At the end of 1937, however, the Third Reich and the Polish government were still interested in maintaining good relations and in November of that year the Polish-German minority declaration was announced. For at least one year this declaration secured the normalization of minority relations but it did not influence in any way the policy of the German Nazi camp in Poland. This camp was becoming to an ever greater degree, the political instrument of the Third Reich, which established in this way the potential Fifth Column in

Poland, directed, instructed and financed from Berlin. It was built on the sociological and psychological foundations of the above described transformations of the German minority which, although it had in the inter-war period particularly advantageous conditions for development in comparison with the other national minorities in Poland, felt itself to be closely connected with the German *Reich* and adopted the national-socialist ideology as the realization of its nationalist aim and aspirations.¹⁰ The formal loyalty towards the Polish state declared by the leaders and the disciplined masses of the German national group was in the years 1934—1938 only the function of the Polish-German rapprochement policy sponsored at that time by Hitler. It was as far back as the Summer of 1934 when he declared at the secret conference of representatives of Germans abroad:

"My first demand from you therefore, is blind obedience. You are not the judges of what is to be done in your district. Neither shall I always be in position to explain to you in detail what my intention is... The policy of the overseas German groups is no longer to be debated and voted upon, but to be determined here by me, or by my deputy, Party Comrade Hess."¹¹

And fact until the Autumn of 1939 the policy of the German minority in Poland was being determined from Berlin in the spirit of appeasing the more string contrasts and creating appearances of loyalty towards the state. But this lasted only until the moment when Hitler decided to finally solve "the Polish problem."

In the period between Munich and the occupation of Prague, Poland was subjected to particularly strong political pressure on the part of the Third Reich. The Ribbentrop-Lipski talks of October 24 1938,¹² the demands put forward by Hitler during Col. Beck's visit to Berchtesgaden on January 5, 1939, and finally the proposals brought by Ribbentrop to Warsaw on the 26th of the same

month—these were the successive stages in the growing diplomatic pressure. Poland was confronted with the alternative: either to renounce her sovereign rights in Pomerania and her vital rights in Gdańsk (Danzig), accede to the anti-commintern pact and thus become a vassal of the Third Reich, or reject the German demands and face the Nazi aggression alone.

Beside the question of Gdańsk and the highway across Pomerania the question of the alleged persecution of members of the German minority by the Polish authorities and community became an instrument of pressure on Poland. In a speech in Bydgoszcz on September 11, 1938, the Chairman of the *Deutsche Vereinigung*—Dr Kohnert made sharp accusations against the Polish state and demanded that the proposed *Bund der Deutschen in Polen* be recognized as an autonomous, public and legal representation of the German minority. Similar demands were put forward in the impassioned speech made in Poznań in November by Rudolf Wiesner at the Congress of the *Jung-deutsche Partei*. In threatening tones he stated that the treatment of the German minority group was not Poland's internal affair, that it also depended on the will of Germany and on the disposition of relations between Germany and Poland. Wiesner next criticized the legal definition of a "national minority" and put forward the demand that full corporate rights be granted to the "German national group."¹³ The two speeches nevertheless contained protestations of German-Polish friendship and of a sincere will to co-operate with the Polish state, but entirely new accents could already be heard in these as well. The demand for national autonomy and for special rights were very reminiscent of Henlein's Karlsbad programme and also of the demands put forward by the German leaders Kundt, Karamzin and Oldofredi in the already crippled Czechoslovakia.

Approximately at the same time the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* delivered to the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs a memorandum "on the intolerable situation of the *Volksdeutsche*

in Poland and the necessity for *Reich* intervention..." The chairman of the VDA General Haushofer, discussed this matter with Hitler who declared that.

"... he did not intend to put up any longer with the conduct of our Eastern neighbours towards his fellow Germans."¹⁴

The German Embassy in Warsaw began to increase the number of *démarches* "in defence" of the German minority.*¹⁵ This even led to the setting up of a Polish-German minority commission.

Following the rejection by Poland of the German proposals of March 21, 1939, after guarantees had been granted to Poland by Great Britain, and after Hitler's April speech, the situation became unequivocal: the German attack on Poland was only a matter of time. From April, the Polish authorities tightened up to a certain extent the regulations with regard to the German minority. In great measure this was done under pressure of public opinion which sensed the approach of mortal danger. These moves bore the character of retaliation for the increased persecutions of Poles in Germany and particularly in the then eastern territories of Germany, and were confined exclusively to certain limitations on the extremely ramified political and economic life as well as on the schools and the liquidation of centres of diversion of *Nazi* organizations.¹⁶ *Nazi* propaganda whipped up these administrative measures and presented them as persecutions of the Germans in Poland.

The press was full of reports of the "wrongs" done to Germans in Poland. Col. Beck writes as follows in his memoirs:

"... the information items published by the German press and inspired by the Government, were each examined separately by us and the Government of the *Reich* was never able to prove the correctness of the accusations levelled against the Polish Government."¹⁷

* See below p. 43. telegram by British Ambassador in Warsaw—H. Kennard, defining the German charges as grossly exaggerated if not completely falsified.

A long list of "chicaneries" and "persecutions", allegedly aimed at the German minority during this period, was given in Chapter IV of the German White Book.¹⁸

This mentions 23 cases of violent death of Germans shot between April 1 and August 31, 1939 (among others, attempts to illegally cross the frontier, escapes from arrest, frontier incidents, and only a few cases in connection with political incidents). It is from this figure that there later grew the monstrous lie "the murder at a time when the most profound peace reigned, of 62,000 *Volksdeutsche* in Poland."¹⁹ Similarly, the figure of 5,435 Germans killed or missing during the September Campaign (as published in the official German communiqué of December 30, 1939) was later increased (on the order of the Minister for Internal Affairs of the Reich) to 58,000.*

The resolute attitude of the Polish population and of the authorities as well as the comparatively small number and lack of compact concentrations of the German minority in Poland compelled the Nazi camp to resign from any mass action of the political Fifth Column on the lines of Austria and the Sudeten and to apply slightly different tactics. On May 12, 1939, Senator Hasbach and former Senator Wiesner submitted to the President of the Polish Republic a memorandum containing assurances as to the loyalty of the German minority towards the State.²⁰

In the course of the spring and summer of 1939 the Polish authorities were able to observe the seeming disappearance of the activity of German mass organizations. This was tantamount to a passing from legal to secret forms of action and was closely connected with a simultaneous expansion of the network of espionage and diversionary cells.²¹

At the same time thousands of young Germans fled to Germany where they underwent special training for espionage

* See below p. 65, the review of the book by Prof. K. M. Pospieszalski: "The case of 58,000 »Volksdeutsche«".

and diversionary activity at camp organized for this purpose. Such departures were already taking place during the period of Polish-German rapprochement and multiplied particularly in the winter of 1938—1939. In early summer the military authorities calculated that 12,000 Polish reservists from Silesia were on the German side of the frontier. There were cases of desertion in uniform across the border, and even with arms;²² several hundred soldiers from the 23rd Infantry Division fled.²³ In the period from the beginning of July to August 16 proceedings were started for the deprivation of Polish citizenship of 6,375 persons of German nationality, who evaded military service in escaping to the *Reich*.²⁴

This mass desertion was the result of whispered propaganda, spread in an organized way, calling on the young Germans to boycott the Polish mobilization and take refuge in the territory of the Third *Reich*.²⁵

Preparations for espionage and diversionary activity The directive of the Chief of Staff of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*—General Keitel, of April 3, 1939²⁶ is the first document marking the beginning of military preparations for the attack on Poland. The general direction of preparations for diversionary action in Poland did not come under the Supreme Command of the *Wehrmacht*, but under the *SS Reichsführer*—Himmler.²⁷ These preparations began at the latest in the spring of 1939 and were carried out in Poland by secret cells of the *NSDAP*, completely independently from the activity of the *Abwehr*. Already in April, the Polish authorities intercepted a letter from the head of the *Auslandsorganisation*—Bohle, to the *Landesgruppenleiter* in Poland. The letter announced deliveries of arms for the *NSDAP* secret network. These arms arrived in August and were transported to the provinces in the motor-cars of German consulates and minority leaders. The police seized, among others, a motor-car of the General Consulate in Poznań and the private motor-car

of the well known *JDP* leader—Senator Wambeck from Rogoźno in Great Poland. A number of members of the underground *NSDAP* organization were arrested and transports of arms confiscated in some localities in Poznań voivodship.²⁹

The first secret meetings and exercises of the para-military organization *Selbstschutz* took place in the forests in the vicinity of Ostromencko already in the winter of 1938—1939. The Pomeranian *Selbstschutz* was established probably on the initiative of Himmler's adjutant—Ludolf von Alvensleben, who stayed for three weeks in the autumn of 1938 as private guest at the estate of von Kries near Toruń.²⁹

The organizational activity of the German Fifth Column could be felt in Silesia and in the region of Łódź. Already in July 1939, so-called *Freikorps*—secret assault groups of the *Jung-deutsche Partei* were established in Bielsko and vicinity.³⁰ At the same time the Breslau *Abwehrstelle* created in the industrial region of Upper Silesia, an underground *Kriegsorganisation* numbering 1,200 local Germans.³¹ The Polish authorities fell upon the tracks of these organizations in the middle of August in connection with the frontier incident at Piekary and the discovery of a secret arm depot in the local church. The German Consul in Katowice was mixed up in this affair, as well as the former Senator and *JDP* chief—Wiesner, who, without awaiting further developments of the investigation, fled to Germany.³²

On August 25, 1939 a certain German in Mała Solna, near Łódź received a telegram: "Mother dying, prepare wreaths." This telegram—a signal to start the sabotage action—attracted the notice of the Polish police and helped to uncover a wide diversion network. Explosives, guns, automatic pistols and secret radio stations were found during searches carried out in Łódź, Aleksandrów, Konstantynów and Tomaszów. In Łódź alone 24 Germans were arrested who stated during interrogation that an underground organization was preparing sabotage acts

against military objects, communication lines, the main post office and telephone exchange in Łódź.³³

At the same time, Detachment I of the *Amt Ausland-Abwehr des OKW* intensified to a maximum degree the espionage activity in Poland and expanded a dense network of agents equipped with concealed radio transmitting apparatus.³⁴ Already in the spring of 1939 the arrest of a certain Baldyga enabled the Polish authorities to render harmless a group of German spies acting in the Warsaw military region: it was established that there had been espionage infiltration into the Military Cartographic Institute and several German mobile instructors, the so-called *Wanderlehrer*, were arrested. During the summer, the Polish counter intelligence discovered an espionage network organized by Colonel Gerstenberg, the German Military Attaché in Warsaw.³⁵ The Nazi *Sicherheitsdienst* also took an active part in the preparations for aggression against Poland.

On May 22, 1939, a separate *Zentralstelle II Polen* was established within the main office of the *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS*, with the task of preparing a central file of persons, unions and institutions in Poland. Data for this file were collected by *SD* espionage cells created in the more important towns of Poland.³⁶ In the summer of 1939 the *Sicherheitsdienst* carried out in Poland and on the territory of the Free City of Danzig a mass campaign of provocations. Special *Einsatzgruppen* of the *SD* were to perpetrate more than two hundred bomb attacks and set fire to a number of buildings housing German minority organizations, German monuments and cultural facilities, as well as buildings belonging to Polish *Volksdeutsche*. This was to give the pretext to German propaganda to proclaim to the entire world that the Germans in Poland were subjected to unheard of persecutions.³⁷ The majority of these provocations were carried out.*

* See below pp. 45—48.

The last days of peace The diversionary activities proper of the German Fifth Column began already prior to the outbreak of the war. It is necessary to mention here two frontier incidents provoked by *Abwehr* detachments; the incursion over the border of East Prussia on August 23, as well as the attack on the Jabłonków Pass on August 25. In this second case a group of 360 diversionists did not receive the order calling off the start of the general attack on Poland at dawn on August 26, and fought a long skirmish for the Jabłonków tunnel and the railway station of Mosty.³⁸ In the last days of August two important acts of sabotage against Polish communication lines were carried out: a bomb explosion at the Tarnów railway station and the tearing up of rails and telephone wires on the railway lines between Bobrek-Podmonasterz and Bobrek-Borynicze in south-eastern Poland.³⁹ It is clear that the intension here was to delay and desorganize Polish military transports.

G e r m a n diversionary activity during the September Campaign On September 1, 1939, at 4.45 a.m. the German armed forces, without declaration of war, crossed the Polish frontier and began offensive operations which, after three weeks of bitter fighting, led to the break down of the Polish resistance and to the occupation of the Polish State by the Nazi aggressor. One of the subordinate factors, although of extreme importance in the German *Blitzkrieg*, was the mass diversionary action and the activity of German spies behind the front lines of the fighting Polish detachments as well as in the more distant rear. Taking a leading part in these actions were groups and units from among the German minority which in the years 1933—1939 had been carefully prepared by the legal and secret Nazi organizations to play the role of a political and military diversionary detachment of the Third Reich.

Silesia Before dawn on September 1,—two hours before the beginning of hostilities, diversionist detachments of the *Abwehr* disguised as miners and metallurgical workers, slipped through the frontier to the industrial region of Upper Silesia, where, in co-operation with the local underground *Kriegsorganisation*, they attempted to seize the more important collieries and industrial establishments. The *Kampf — und Sabotage-Organisation* composed of Sudeten national socialist as well as the voluntary formation *Freikorps-kämpfer Ebbinghaus* composed of Silesian Germans,—Polish citizens who had fled to the *Reich*,—took part in the diversionary action in Upper Silesia. Two hundred and twenty Polish *Volksdeutsche* fell in this struggle.⁴⁰

In Bielsko the armed assault groups of the *Freikorps* seized the key positions and opened fire on the withdrawing Polish troops, inflicting heavy casualties and forcing them to engage in bitter street fighting. The Nazi diversion was very active in many other localities in the Bielsko region making it impossible for the Poles to evacuate the ammunition dump in Biała and the fuel stores in Czechowice.⁴¹

Great Poland Between September 1, and 3, several armed actions took place in the Poznań voivodship, and on some fifteen other occasions the Polish police and gendarmerie succeeded in paralysing attempts at diversion, prepared by the underground *NSDAP*.⁴² In Leszno the local Germans opened fire on Polish troops and frontier guards; among the diversionists caught with arms in hand and shot, were Müller, Veigt nad Hausler well known citizens of the town.⁴³

Pomerania Lively Nazi diversionary activity could be noted in Pomerania already in the first hours after the start of the war. One of the centres of this activity was located on the Kieplin estate in Tuchola district—the property of Gerhard Wiestenbergs, a former officer of the Imperial German Army. In the last days of August, fifty Germans aged from 25 to 40 arrived there and on the morning

of September 1, a plane landed in the vicinity of the park from which machine guns were unloaded. On the same day, in the locality of Łęgowo Bydgoskie, diversionists fired on a military train proceeding from Toruń to Bydgoszcz, and the next day on the railway station and at a military detachment marching on the road.⁴⁴ The above facts constituted, however, only a subsidiary to the biggest action of the Fifth Column in Poland—the Nazi provocation in Bydgoszcz.

Already one week before the war the German organizations in Pomerania received the order **Bydgoszcz, Sunday, September, 3** to concentrate their main forces on the first day of hostilities in Bydgoszcz and its immediate vicinity. In the last days of August a carbon copy of the order was found at the home of a German woman—Berta Jäger, in Pruszcz. During the search carried out in her house the police discovered an arms depot in the cellar.⁴⁵ Between September 1—2, groups of diversionists intermingling with the mass of fleeing Polish civilian population, began to arrive in Bydgoszcz and put up at the houses of local Germans as well as at German enterprises, such as the *Persil* factory, the Bauer Brewery, etc. Alongside the diversionists came wagons and motor-cars loaded with arms and ammunition. The Pomeranian Nazis were reinforced by groups of paratroopers and agents brought across the front line who succeeded in penetrating into the Bydgoszcz region. On the night of September 2—3, the Germans disguised in Polish uniforms began to spread panic in the town and urged the population to flee immediately.

The Polish civilian authorities and police left Bydgoszcz the same night and the town was taken over by second line units of the 15th Infantry Division under the command of the town commandant—Major Albrycht, and the citizens' guard which was then being organized. Early on the morning of September 3, remnants of the 9th Infantry Division, broken up at Koronowo, passed through the town. This must have created the impression among local Germans that the first *Wehrmacht* units

would enter the town at any moment. They did not know that on the outskirts of Bydgoszcz were units of the still intact 15th Infantry Division.

At about 10.20 a.m., on the squares and thoroughfares of the town, German diversionists opened fire with hand weapons and machine guns on the retreating troops and the fleeing civilian population. As a result of the firing the Polish side suffered casualties in killed and wounded. It has been established by an investigation conducted since the war, that fire was opened from some fifty points in the town, including several church towers and two cemeteries. The main nests of diversion which should be mentioned were the *Persil* factory, the Bauer Brewery, the piano factory, the building of the German rowing club *Frithjof*, as well as a number of residential houses on the Gdańska, Bernadyńska and Jagiellońska streets. After the initial panic was brought under control, the Polish military authorities and the armed civic guard began an energetic counter-action. Military patrols sent out throughout the town, began to liquidate the centres of diversion, and the citizens' guards and the Polish population sought out individual diversionists.

Nearly 300 Germans were killed during the fighting and the counter action, including many who had arrived from the *Reich* or from outlying regions of Polish Pomerania. It is quite probable that in the general disturbance a number of innocent and loyal citizens of German nationality also lost their life, but the responsibility for their deaths falls first of all on the organizers and those who took part in the revolt. It should be stressed, however, that some 600 persons arrested as probable participants in the revolt were released in the evening by the departing Polish military authorities because of a lack of convincing evidence. Although the situation was generally in hand by the afternoon of September 3, isolated actions of the diversionists against withdrawing units of the 15th Infantry Division continued in the evening and during the night and in the southern suburbs even on the following day.⁴⁶

The operational background of the events described above, the beginning and the course of the fighting permit one to draw the conclusion that the decision for the armed revolt was probably taken by the local leaders without consulting the German military authorities. An important role was probably played here by various local personal ambitions and perhaps also by some particular plans and policy of Himmler.⁴⁷ The harvest of the Bydgoszcz "bloody Sunday" was: 300 Germans killed, monstrous lies about unprovoked Polish cruelties and finally the bestial murder of Pomeranian Poles as a retaliation for the Polish repression in Bydgoszcz.⁴⁸

In the region of Łódź Nazi diversion also played no small role within the zone of activity of the "Łódź" Army and the Reserve Army "Prusy". The rapid progress of the German troops in the region of Kępno and Ostrzeszów was immensely facilitated owing to the fact that guides were assigned to each unit of the 10th and 24th Infantry Divisions advancing in that area. The guides were recruited from among young Germans of the Kępno district, who had fled to the Reich.⁴⁹ On September 6 to 8, German diversionary groups fought with particular bitterness against the defeated and retreating detachments and trains of the "Łódź" Army. This action took place at Nowosolna and Skoszewy, in the region of Brzeziny and Skierniewice, as well as the Błonie, that is already on the immediate approaches to Warsaw. The harassing actions of the diversionists interrupted liaison with the Staffs and aggravated the atmosphere of panic and confusion. Thus for example the operational group of General Thommée failed to receive on time the order to retreat owing to the fact that Major J. Makowiecki who was carrying the order, was killed on the evening of September 6, by diversionists who were blocking the road.

Diversionary action broke out also in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, on the night of the September 6/7.⁵⁰

**In Little
Poland and
beyond
the Vistula**

At the same time German spies and diversionists intermingling with the crowds of civilian population fleeing from Silesia and the Cracow region, spread fear and panic along the lines of retreat of the "Kraków" Army. The activities of the Fifth Column were not confined to the operational area but reached far into the rear to the east of the Vistula. During the night of September 6—7, sabotage groups operating with the support of the German colonies in Stężyca and Krasnogrzyba, began to threaten the central arsenal at Stawy near Dęblin.⁵¹

**Dropping of
paratroopers**

The intensive dropping of paratroopers considerably strengthened the diversionary activity of the German minority. These took place all over the country: near Toruń, Kielce, Radom and Warsaw, in the vicinity of bridges on the Vistula and San rivers, and even in the Białowieża forest and in the Polesia region. Between 500 and 1,000 paratroopers took part in this action. For the most part these were young Germans, Polish citizens, who had fled from Poland and had been trained in the Reich. The paratroopers in civilian clothes and in Polish uniforms were assisted and supported by the neighbouring German settlements.⁵²

Final remarks

The relatively narrow scope of this essay has compelled us to mention only the most important cases of Fifth Column activity in the course of the September Campaign. We have purposefully omitted numerous examples of espionage, light and visual signalling, the discovery of secret radio stations, the tapping of Polish telecommunications and their interruption, the spreading of false information, the sowing of panic among the civilian population, etc. widely quoted in all Polish reports.⁵³ A certain number of these reports were probably the product of

the imagination as in the atmosphere of defeat and disorderly withdrawal a strong psychosis was born, compelling one to look for spies and diversionists everywhere. It should not be forgotten, however, that as it is quite rightly stressed by the authors of the *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Światowej* (The Polish Army Forces in the Second World War):



"... this imagined diversion was in large measure the result of the real diversion and eventually, as regards the final effect, both were acting in unison."⁵⁴

The mass activity of the Nazi Fifth Column is confirmed by authentic German documents. In the first days of the war a confidential circular fell into the hands of the Polish military authorities: *Merkblatt zur Bekanntgabe an die gegen Polen eingesetzten Truppen*.^{55*}

This document informed the officers of the German armed forces that in military operations against Poland members of the "German national group" would also take part—dressed in civilian clothes or Polish uniforms—as well as other national minority groups hostile to the Polish State and special detachments of paratroopers. The circular described in detail the aims and methods of the diversionist activity, details of clothing to be worn and identification signals, the types of weapons and ammunition which was to be supplied to them and finally the recognition watchword: *Echo* pronounced identically in the German, Polish and Ukrainian languages. The circular was accompanied by a supplement entitled *Decknamenverzeichnis* with the imprint *Geheime Kommandosache*, containing the code names of the regimental command and also of its three battalions and fourteen companies. It can be assumed that these was the *ordre de bataille* for the German diversionary battalions which were to operate in Poland. It is not known whether it concerned only the paratroopers and the detachments of the *Abwehr* or also applied to all the diversionary forces utilised in Poland (see photostat copy of the document).

* Instruction for the troops to be used against Poland.

**CONFIDENTIAL CIRCULAR MERKBLATT ZUR BEKANNTGABE AN DIE GEGEN
POLEN EINGESETZTEN TRUPPEN.**

- 4.) Diese Erkennungsmarken sind:
- a) rotes Tuch mit großem gelben Punkt in der Mitte, Teil u
...beinahe in Taschenstiefgröße
- 
- b) hellblaue Arabische mit gelbem Punkt in der Mitte,
- 
- c) hellbraun - großer Kombinationsanzug mit gelber Granate
auf Kragekopflage und auf linken Armel.
 - d) es werden noch weitere Kräfte deutscher Minderheiten und
anderer Volkgruppen den Kampf des deutschen Heeres mitern
stellen. Sie tragen folgende Erkennungszeichen:
1) Bakenkreuzarmbänder;
2) als Waffen Pistolen Nr. 14 u. 31 sowie gegebenenfalls
Handgranaten technischen Moders,
 - e) als Stichwort für Sämtliches (deutsch, polnisch, ukrainisch
russisch und tschechisch)
" E t h e "
- (Überall gleich ausgesprochen wie geschrieben)
- 5) Demgemäß ist das Verhalten des Gegners daraufhin zu be-
achten, ob die verbreiteten Erkennungszeichen aufziehen
oder sonstige Anzeichen darauf hinweisen, daß bei dem gegen-
überliegenden Gegner Angehörige der Minderheiten zum Kampf
des Kampfes gewillt sind.
- 6) Es muß damit gerechnet werden, daß sich nicht alle Deutsche-
stämmeigen und Angehörigen anderer Volkgruppen der Verpflichtung
entziehen können. Einige Angehörige dieser Gruppen werden
sicher als besonderen Grund in der politischen Arbeit zu be-
nutzen.
- 7.) a) Die Angehörigen der Minderheiten, die sich der Verpflichtung
entziehen nicht in Kampf gehen, werden, wenn möglich, nach
Möglichkeit sofort von Soldaten zum nächsten deutschen
zu trennen und versucht wie Kriegsgefangene zu behandeln.
Angehörige der Minderheiten, die sich nicht zum Kampf
- 3 -

The ctivity of the German Fifth Column in 1939 did not, and could not, have such decisive effect on the course of the September Campaign as was imagined by the Polish population

in the atmosphere of the Fifth Column psychosis brought about by the confirmed facts of the German diversion and by the panic and despair caused by the unexpected and lightning defeat. The Fifth Column activity, however, undoubtedly, had an effect on the development of operations in particular sectors, it accelerated the chaos and the disorganization of the Polish resistance. Repressions of the diversionary action carried out by the Polish authorities and population, gave the Nazi propaganda a pretext to spread false stories of bloody persecutions of Germans in Poland. In a general evaluation of the effects of the German diversionary activities, the authors of *Polskie Siły Zbrojne* state:

"... in the atmosphere of defeat these activities considerably contributed to the creation throughout the country, in military units and even in the Army staffs of a feeling of insecurity and nervous strain which helped enormously in the birth and spreading of panic"³⁶

The authors further stress that particular cases of this diversion.

"... considerably contributed to the final disintegration and mix up of Polish units."³⁷

The phenomenon of the German Fifth Column in Poland was the product of a lengthy historical process. The social basis for this phenomenon was the German minority living in the Polish state which in the years 1933—1939 was carefully prepared by both the legal and secret Nazi organizations to fulfil a political task and to become a military diversion unit of the Third Reich. In 1939, faced by the dilemma: loyalty to the Polish state or "faithfulness" to the German nation, by far the larger section of the German minority chose the second eventuality and more or less actively sided with the Third Reich and Nazi aggression.

After the events of 1945, this chapter of Polish-German relations has been finally closed. Today, twenty years after the events of 1939, we are writing on this subject owing to the fact

that West German historians and publicists continue to perpetuate the myth of "German loyalty" and "Polish persecutions." The erection of bridges of understanding and co-operation between nations cannot be based on a distorted and falsified picture of the past.

NOTES

¹ Cf. Th. Birschenk, *Die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Polen 1932—1937*, Würzburg 1934, pp. 362—368; O. Heike, *Das Deutschtum in Polen*, Bonn 1955, p. 234; P. E. Nesarski, *Deutsche Jugendbewegung und Jugendarbeit in Polen 1919—1939*, Würzburg 1957, pp. XI—XII; R. Breyer, "Das Deutsche Reich und Polen 1932—1937", *Aussenpolitik und Volksgruppenfragen*, Würzburg 1957, p. 264.

² Cf. B. Wiewióra, „Tzw. Recht auf die Heimat”, *Przegląd Zachodni* No. 5/1958.

³ L. De Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War*, Chicago 1956, p. 142.

⁴ See A. Kucner, "Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce i dążenia rządu niemieckiego do utrzymania jej stanu posiadania w b. zaborze pruskim" (The German minority in Poland and the aspirations of the German government to retain its state of possessions in the former Prussian partition territory), *Przegląd Zachodni* No. 4/1958.

⁵ R. W. Staniewicz, "Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce — V kolumna Hitlera" (The German minority in Poland — Hitler's Fifth Column), *Przegląd Zachodni* No. 2/1959.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ In addition to German papers and works enumerated in note (1) see also K. Gostyński's "Przewrót hitlerowski w Niemczech i Niemcy w Polsce" (Hitler's revolution in Germany and Germans in Poland), *Sprawy Narodowościowe* Nos. 1—2 8c 3/1946; J. Winiewicz, *Mobilizacja sił niemieckich w Polsce* (Mobilization of the German forces in Poland); R. W. Staniewicz *op. cit.*

⁸ *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, vol. V, Doc. No. 51, p. 71 and Doc. No. 85, p. 112 (memorandum of Counsellor Schliep of the Auswärtiges Amt and memorandum of Schwager of October, 27, 1938.

⁹ See R. W. Staniewicz, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ E. g. R. Breyer *op. cit.* — expresses the view that national socialism was an essential factor of the integration of the German *Volksgruppe* in Poland (p. 226). Concerning the feeling of solidarity with the entire "German national community" he writes elsewhere: "The new national conscience trespassed, however, state boundaries, boosted by the feeling that the appurtenance of the nation is something stronger than state appurtenance... The notion which all Germans espoused does not stop at state boundaries ... and has been clearly defined in the word *Volksdeutsch*". "*Das neue Volksbewusstsein griff über Staatsgrenzen hinaus, unterstützt durch das Gefühl, einem Volksverbande stärker als einem Staate anzugehören ... Ein Begriff, der alle Deutsche umfasste ohne sich an Staatsgrenzen zu halten ... wurde mit dem Wort Volksdeutsche geprägt*", (p. 50).

¹¹ Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler speaks*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1940, p. 147.

¹² During this conversation with the Polish Ambassador, von Ribbentrop put forward the demand that Gdańsk be joined to the *Reich* and that the Germans be granted the right to build an extraterritorial highway across Pomerania.

¹³ Polish translation of the full text of both speeches in J. Winiewicz's book *Mobilizacja Sił Niemieckich w Polsce* (Mobilization of the German forces in Poland), Warsaw 1939, pp. 165—206. Wiesner's remarks and demands with regard to the legal status of the "German nationality group" were a practical application of the national socialist *Volkstumlehre* which laid down the construction of the concept of legal national appurtenance (See H. Klauss, *Nationalsozialistisches Volksgruppenrecht*, Würzburg 1937).

¹⁴ *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, vol. V, Doc. No. 99, p. 125,—note by von Twardowski dated 12.XI.1938.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 132, p. 174 and Doc. No. 134, p. 176.

¹⁶ See Archives of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs concerning restrictions with regard to German schools as well as the weekly situation reports from April—July 1939 (AAN, Section MSW Sign. 3174 and 335c).

¹⁷ *Pamiętniki Józefa Becka* (Wybór) — Memoirs of Joseph Beck (Excerpts), Czytelnik, Warszawa 1955, p. 137.

¹⁸ *Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges*, Berlin 1939, pp. 337—381.

¹⁹ Hitler's speech of December 11, 1942.

20 *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, London 1940, p. 32.

21 Cf. situation reports IV—VII 1939 (AAN-MSW- 3350).

22 *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej* (Polish Armed Forces in the Second World War), London 1951, vol. I, part 1, p. 353.

23 Wł. Steblik *Zarys działań wojennych armii "Kraków"* (Outlines of war operations of the "Kraków" Army), London 1949.

24 AAN-MSW—3, 150.

25 L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 152, based on the information supplied by the Chief of Department II of Abwehr—Gen. Labousen.

26 PS-2327 *Trial of the major war criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. XXX. p. 190. This directive informed the Commanders in Chief of the Wehrmacht, the Luftwaffe and the Kriegsmarine of Hitler's decision that work on the operational plans should be completed so as to allow the attack to begin at any time after September 1, 1939.

27 *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 1, p. 353.

28 Written testimony of St. Pieńkowski handed on June 6, 1948, to the American prosecutor in Nuremberg. Copy in the Archives of the Instytut Zachodni in Poznań, Doc. II—124.

29 J. Skórzyński, "Selbstschutz — V Kolumna", *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, Warszawa, vol. X, pp. 28—30.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 32 and *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, p. 84.

31 L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 155, according to *Kriegstagebuch* of the Abwehr Department II, September 3, 1939.

32 *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, pp. 40—41.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 86, 90.

34 L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 152. Elaboration of the Polish General Staff Department II, entitled: "Możliwości zaskoczenia" (Surprise possibilities) (L. 23661/II of 12.VI. 1939), stated among other things: "... It results from the testimony of German agents arrested by our counter-intelligence and particularly from the tasks entrusted to the German agents, that the German intelligence has a rule good information as to our military preparations and the preparedness of our units stationed in the western voivodships. It is certain that the German intelligence has at its disposal a great number of informers among the German minority, as well as,

probably, rapid communication facilities (short-wave stations)", quoted from *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 1, p. 455.

³⁵ *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, pp. 38—39.

³⁶ J. Skórzyński, *op. cit.*, 31.

³⁷ See E. J. Osmańczyk, *Dowody prowokacji — Nieznane archiwum Himmlera* (Proofs of provocations — Himmler's unknown archives), Kraków 1951. The data contained in Osmańczyk's work have found confirmation in information imparted by General Lahousen as well as in a note of 8.VIII.1940 *Einsatz des SD im Ausland* (NG—2316); cf. L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

³⁸ L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 154 (acc. HTE—Abwehr of 23rd, 25th, 26th, and 27th August, 1939); *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 1, p. 406; W. Steblik, "Armia 'Kraków' w przededniu wojny 1939" (The "Kraków" Army on the Eve of the War in 1939), *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny*, Warsaw No. 1/1958, p. 183. The author mentions a number of other actions by German diversionary groups in the frontier area of Silesia between August 23—31, 1939.

³⁹ *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 1, pp. 415—416.

⁴⁰ L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, (acc. KTBW—Abwehr of Sept. 3 and 5, 1939 and according to information by General Lahousen); *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 2, p. 226; K. Pospieszalski, *Sprawa 58,000 "Volksdeutschów"* (The Case of 58,000 "Volksdeutsche") Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 1959, p. 196.

⁴¹ *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, pp. 84—85; *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 2, p. 237; J. Rzepecki, *Wspomnienia i przyczynki historyczne* (Memoirs and historical contributions), Warszawa 1956; J. Skórzyński *Selbstschutz-V Kolumna*, pp. 32—34.

⁴² Cf. written testimony by S. Pieńkowski.

⁴³ *The German Fifth Column in Poland* pp. 87—88, 115—118.

⁴⁴ J. Skórzyński, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁴⁵ K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁴⁶ Already in the evening of September 3, the operations staff officer of the "Toruń" Army reported to the Polish Supreme Command "... in the afternoon, German elements in Bydgoszcz organized and executed something of a large scale armed diversion. The revolt has been bloodily suppressed" (conversation over Hughes' apparatus between Aleksandro-

wicz and Stachiewicz on the September 3, 1939 at 18. 52 hours, *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part. 2, p. 380). All other Polish sources unanimously confirm the course of events in Bydgoszcz. See: *The German Fifth Column in Poland*, pp. 50—76; J. Kołodziejczyk, *Prawda o tzw. krwawej niedzieli bydgoskiej* ('The truth of the so-called 'Bloody Sunday' in Bydgoszcz), Bydgoszcz 1945; *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part. 2, pp. 102, 128, 130; J. Skórzyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 35—39; K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, pp. 172—173, 181—188. The above works contain extensive extracts from the report of Prosecutor Garszyński of October 15, 1945. This report contains the findings of a detailed investigation into this affair carried out by the Polish authorities in 1945.

⁴⁷ The activity of Gero von Gersdorff, who according to the testimony of the diversionists captured in Bydgoszcz was in charge of the preparations for the diversion in Pomerania, caused a conflict between the German military intelligence and the Królewiec Gestapo already in the summer 1939 (*The German Fifth Column in Poland*, pp. 83, 38). Ludolf von Alvensleben arrived in Bydgoszcz together with a special SD. detachment directly after the first Wehrmacht units (J. Skórzyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 39—40, according to the testimony given before the Court of Appeal in Bydgoszcz by Richard Hildebrandt, the former S.S. and Police Commander in Gdańsk—Document No. K 36/49).

⁴⁸ See: K. Leszczyński, "Eksterminacja ludności na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939—1945" (Extermination of the population on Polish Territory in the years 1939—1945), *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, vol. X, pp. 117—140.

⁴⁹ See recollections of a young German estate owner from the Kępno district—Baron Gispert von Romborg-Klitzing, entitled *Meine Erlebnisse als Sonderführer bei der deutschen Wehrmacht während des Polenfeldzuges September 1939* (description in the Archives of the Western Institute, Doc. I—712). Cf. also *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 2, p. 154.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, part 2, pp. 571—572, 565, 578, 583, 590, 593 and 626.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, part 2, p. 653, according to the report by Colonel Zawisza of September 7, 0.10. hours.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. I, part 2, pp. 129, 309, 331, 335—336, 634 and 733.

⁵³ About one hundred and fifty such accounts and excerpts from them were published in *The German Fifth Column in Poland*.

⁵⁴ *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w drugiej wojnie światowej*, vol. I, part 2, p. 733.

⁵⁵ A photostat of this document has been published in an appendix to *The German Fifth Column in Poland*. It was found on two German flyers—Emil Ambrost and Wilhelm Hermings, shot down and taken prisoner near Poznań on September 2, 1939. The code words mentioned in it as well as identification marks were deciphered independently by certain Polish detachments. (*Polskie Siły Zbrojne*, vol. I, part 2, p. 733). The authentic character of the *Merkblatt* is confirmed by its being identical with a similar instruction by General Lahousen of 23.VIII.1939 (NOKW-083); L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 52f.

⁵⁶ *Polskie Siły Zbrojne*, vol. I, part 2, p. 336.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 733.

PROVOCATION IN THE SERVICE OF POLITICS

by

EDWARD ROGOZIŃSKI

"Predicti cives (Danzike) destruxerunt propria voluntate domos dicti oppidi et ierunt ad habitandum in aliis partibus..." (The above cited citizens (Danzike) destroyed the houses of the said town of their own will and went out to dwell in other parts... Statement made by the Teutonic Knights accused of the massacre at Gdańsk of November 14, 1308, extracted from the acts of the process between Poland and the Order, held before Pope Clement V in 1310).

Here is a fragment of a speech by the distinguished West-German politician—Dr. Reinhold Maier, as recorded in the Federal German Republic *Bundestag* report.*

"On first September (1939—E.R.) the German counter-attack began against Poland."**

So, on September 1, 1939 Germany, having been attacked by Poland, began a counter-attack. This is asserted by a known liberal German politician in 1958, barely 19 years after the most terrible war in human history was started by Germany.

It is not the first time that attempts have been made to distort the truth regarding Germany's role in inciting a world conflict. Alfred Rosenberg wrote among other things, in his commentary to the NSDAP programme in 1934 that the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain and the "Dawes diktat" of 1924—documents of Germany's ignominy—were founded on

* *Deutscher Bundestag, Dritte Wahlperiode, Neunte Sitzung, p. 335.*

** "Am 1 September wurde der deutsche Gegenangriff gegen Polen eröffnet."

lies about Germany being guilty for the outbreak of the World War I, and that the purpose of these lies was to destroy Germany.

In analysing the motives for the present endeavours to erase Germany's guilt for the outbreak of World War II, and for its crimes committed during the war,—it is worth while to recall some of the major lies and provocations for there is a constant "method in this madness", as there is madness in this method.

**Propaganda
campaign
motivating
the outbreak
of war** Hitler and also German propaganda alleged that Germany had been attacked by Poland, while, as was revealed at the Nuremberg Trial, the detailed plan of aggression against Poland had been worked out by the German General Staff long before the outbreak of war, and bore the code name *Fall Weiss*. The organizational scheme of May 2, 1938 marked out Warsaw as the command headquarters of the VI *Luftwaffe* group. The plan for occupying Gdańsk (Danzig) had been ready since December 1938, and the battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* on her way to Gdańsk in August 1939, carried a sealed envelope with the order to open fire on the stronghold of Hel.

Already on May 23, 1939 Hitler notified the German Generals that:

"... I intend ... to attack Poland at the first opportunity..."¹ and addressing his Generals on August 22, 1939, at Obersalzberg, Hitler declared, among other things, that:

"have issued the order to shoot anyone who utters even one word criticizing the principle that the goal of this war is not in reaching any fixed line, but in the physical extermination of the enemy. For this purpose I have prepared meanwhile only in the East my *Totenkopf* divisions, ordering them to kill without mercy or pity, any man, woman or child of Polish descent speaking the Polish language... Poland shall

be depopulated and shall be settled by Germans. My pact with Poland merely aimed at gaining time... I will intrust some detachments wearing Polish uniforms, to attack Silesia or the Protectorate.* I don't care whether world believes this. The world only believes in success."²

and further:

"I myself will fix the reason for this war, to serve propaganda purposes; it is immaterial whether it will be credible. Later no one is going to ask the victor whether he told the truth or not. The starting and carrying on of a war does not rely on law, but on victory."³

Three days later, on August 25, 1939, Hitler told the Ambassador of Great Britain:

"Polish acts of provocation have become unbearable, no matter who is responsible for them..."

"In any cases, Germany is resolved to put an end to these kind of Macedonian relations on her eastern frontiers..."⁴

On September 1, 1939, in his order to the army, Hitler stated: "The Germans in Poland are suffering bloody terror... A series of border-incidents, which no power could tolerate, prove that the Poles do not intend to respect the frontiers of the *Reich*. There are no other means of stopping these insane proceedings except from now on to repulse violence with violence."⁵

Meanwhile this is what Mr. H. Kennard, British Ambassador in Warsaw, communicated to his government in a telegram dated August 27, 1939:

"... German allegations of mass ill-treatment of German minority by Polish authorities are gross exaggeration, if not complete falsification.

* That part of Czechoslovakia occupied in March 1939, and not directly incorporated into Germany, was given the name of *Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren*—E.R.

(2) There is no sign of any loss of control of situation by Polish civil authorities. Warsaw (and so far as I can ascertain the rest of Poland) is still completely calm...

(4) In any case it is purely and simply deliberate German provocation in accordance with fixed policy, that has since March exacerbated feeling between the two nationalities. I suppose this has been done with object (a) creating war spirit in Germany, (b) impressing public opinion abroad, (c) provoking either defeatism or apparent aggression in Poland.

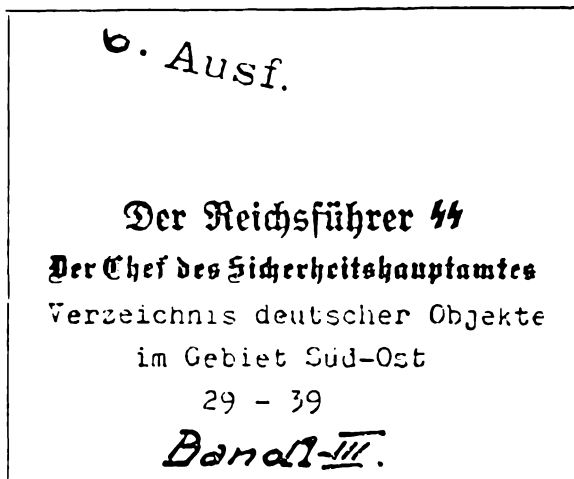
(5) It has signally failed to achieve either of the two latter objects...."⁶

Mr. Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, was as clear on this point when he told von Ribbentrop (Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs) at midnight on August 30, 1939, a few hours before the outbreak of the war, that one could expect complete reserve on the part of the Polish Government only if the German Government adopted a similar attitude on their side of the frontier and if no provocations were carried out by the German minority in Poland. Henderson stated that from current committed acts of sabotage that would justify the severest reprisals on the part of the Polish Government.⁷

German provocations, which were to provide Hitler with the motives for aggression, worked in two opposite directions. Alleged Polish provocations were on the one hand, staged on the German borderland, and on the other, in Poland. The latter being to testify to persecutions of German minority in Poland.

The first group of provocations include in the first place the assault of the Gliwice broadcasting station, and of the frontier post at Hohenlinden on the night of August 31, 1939. In both these cases corpses of previously murdered concentration camp prisoners, dressed up in Polish military uniforms were planted on the scene in order to provide evidence that the coup was carried by Polish troops sent from beyond the border.

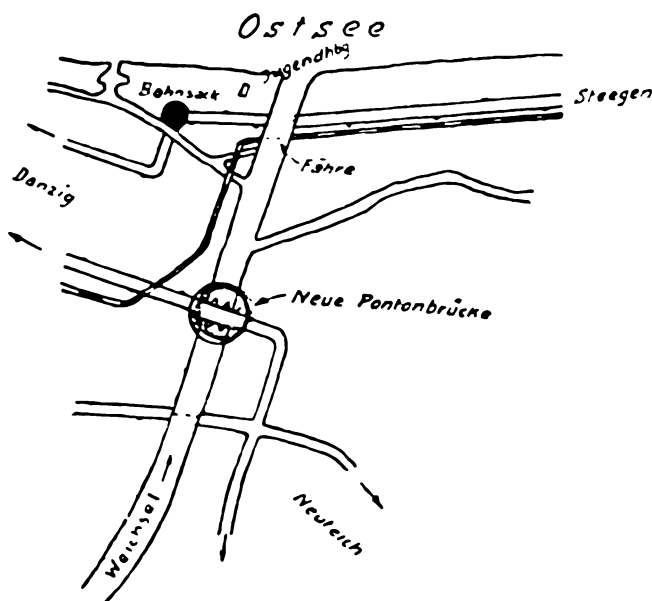
We are in possession of a series of documents, covering some several hundred pages, filed in 223 numbered folders. These were found in 1950 in a coffer in one of the Berlin Courts of Justice. This coffer contained certain documents belonging to the former Central Security Office of the Reich (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) headed by Himmler. Important extracts from these documents have already been published in a book in Polish entitled "Dowody prowokacji" by the journalist, E. Osmańczyk.⁸



The first page of documents
concerning the *Süd-Ost* area.

The above mentioned collection of documents contains a file of acts of provocation, which were to be staged in the summer of 1939 along the Polish-German frontier. The plan was worked out in great detail: every one of the 223 "objectives" in question has its own typographed map (sketch of street positions or of a district), and typewritten instructions compiled in accordance with a uniform scheme. Often a photograph of the objective is attached. At the end of the article we enclose the text of a document in German language and in English translation;

Objekt D 23



"Sketch to planned attempt D 23" (pholostat)

they make interesting study. The whole action is divided into four parts, each having its own large typographed map, as follows:

(1) *Nord-Ost*—refers to 63 objectives along the border in East Prussia and in the Pomerania voivodship.

(2) *Freistadt Danzig*—refers to 32 objectives in the Free City of Danzig.

(3) *Ost*—covers 89 objectives in Poznań voivodship.

(4) *Süd-Ost*—covers 39 objectives in Upper Silesia and on territory beyond the River Olza.

All these objectives were either to be burned down or blown up, and were to serve as "evidence of Polish anti-German acts of provocation."

The purpose of these actions is revealed without ambiguity in the directions given to the agents. For instance: document

D 10—scheme for burning down the granary on the estate in Trąbki Wielkie (Trampken) owned by a German—Captain Buramdt, in the Free City of Danzig—bears the following note:

"The village *Trampken* is inhabited by the largest Polish minority group in the district, it has a Polish school and kindergarten."⁹

—plenty of prospective wrong—doers.

Document D 32—plan of a mock attack on the Gdańsk Post Office—(by setting fire to letter-boxes)—states:

"This kind of action will cause considerable alarm, and, if coinciding with other incidents, will be easily attributed to Poles."¹⁰

Document O 6—describing an attempt to burn down the barn and granary of the German Co-operative in Nowy Tomyśl, contains the following remark:

"As the Poles have in the first place been attacking German Co-operatives, the destruction would be considered as the outcome of their propaganda."¹¹

Document SO 13—plan to blow up the headquarters of the *Jungdeutsche Partei* in Bielsko, emphasizes the "great moral importance of this action."¹²

In many cases the names of appointed agents are quoted: the blasting of the Memorial to the Dead of the World War I, newly erected by the German Association of Veterans and of the monument to Schiller in Cieszyn (document SO 14) was to be performed by the group: Böhm, Löschner and Górniak. The blasting of the headquarters of the German Cultural Union *Kulturbund* was to be done by Stachura and Kratochwil. Spaller and Włodarczyk were appointed to blast and burn down the farm buildings of the Radzionków vicarage, occupied at the time by a *Volksdeutsch* priest.

Some of these acts of provocation were carried out, as was the case in Gliwice and in Hohenlinden, the rest proved to be impracticable or superfluous.

In the speech of August 22, 1939 addressed to his Generals, Hitler predicted the introduction of a system of terror in subjugated Poland. This had, however, to be justified before world opinion and the German nation. Hence the reason for the creation of the blood—curdling tale about tens of thousands of German civilians having been murdered by Poles, on so-called "Bloody Sunday" in Bydgoszcz, and on other occasions.

The official German communiqué of December 30, 1939 stated that the list of German civilians in Poland reported dead or missing after the September Campaign numbered 5,437 persons. However, by February 10, 1940 this number had increased, and the communiqué issued on that day gave the total number as about 58,000 out of whom 12,857 were alleged to be dead and identified, and about 45,000 missing. This second version has given ground for an unprecedented intensification of the propaganda campaign against Poland, which was started before the outbreak of the war. Today some pseudo-scientific studies published in the German Federal Republic, are still apt to quote the figures of this faked version, although the latest investigations made by Prof. K. M. Pospieszalski¹³ have established that the figures in question were made up for a very definite purpose.

On July 19, 1940 Hitler declared that in the past months (before the beginning of the war) some "tens of thousands of Germans had been massacred." on December 11, 1941 he fixed their number at 62,000!

The so-called "Polish terrorism" allegedly preceding the outbreak of the war

This statement was of course neither supported by facts, nor was it in accordance with the official data furnished by publications of the German Foreign Office. The *Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges* (Documents relating to the period

* See below the review of Prof. K. M. Pospieszalski's book "The case of 58,000 »Volksdeutsche«."

before the outbreak of the war) of December 1939 give evidence that the number of Germans who had lost their lives in Poland from April to September 1939, *totalled* 23. Most of these casualties were due to illegal crossing of the border, incidents on the border, and attempts at escaping from prison convoys. The death of only 5 persons could have been attributed to political motives. In these circumstances the propagating of the fantastic number of 62 thousand Germans allegedly murdered in Poland before the war, was an obvious provocation and aimed at justifying the most severe reprisals carried out against the Polish nation.

„Blutsonntag” This is the name given by Nazi propaganda to the events which took place in Bydgoszcz on September 3, 1939.

the

”B l o o d y -

S u n d a y”

at Bydgoszcz

According to propaganda claims, one thousand members of the German minority group were allegedly slaughtered on that day. This lie was to serve as a pretext for and justification of the murder of the mayor and 5,000 Polish inhabitants of Bydgoszcz; it also provided an excuse for the introduction of a system of a bitter persecution.

What were the facts? Here is an excerpt from *Z pierwszej linii frontu* (From the front line) — a book in Polish published in Warsaw in 1943, by the underground movement. It describes the events in Bydgoszcz after thorough and careful investigations had been carried out at the risk of the lives of many Polish patriots. In order to collect the necessary information, the author of the book secretly crossed the frontier between the *Generalgouvernement* and the territory "incorporated" into the Reich. (The *Generalgouvernement* being the name given by the Germans to that part of central Poland which though under complete German domination, was not directly incorporated into the Reich).

Z PIERWSZEJ

LINII

FRONTU

WARSZAWA, 9 MARCU 1943 R.



This is an accurate account of the events in Bydgoszcz:

"At 4 a.m. on Sunday, September 3, retreating Polish artillery units were crossing the town. They were followed at dawn by the infantry and baggage wagons—the retreat was hurried. Between 9 and 10 a.m. a heavy air raid caused panic among the population. This was further increased when in all parts of the town groups of young men entered the air-shelters shouting: 'Fly! The Germans are in the town, they are murdering women and children!'... At the same time shots were heard in the streets of Bydgoszcz. These were fired from the roof-tops, from balconies, from the windows of private houses owned by Germans, and from the German churches. The retreating troops were under heavy fire from machine and automatic guns. All along the route thronged with withdrawing military units, shots were fired. These came from houses in the main Gdańska street, from Walter's

chemist shop on Theatre Square, from the Protestant church on Liberty Place. In order to put an end to this rebellion, the Commander of the local garrison ordered a search of the nests of German diversion. Patrolling military units entered the premises occupied by the Germans, from where shots were being fired. But this did not end the shooting which continued until the evening, and even the soldiers carrying out the search were attacked. Finally 260 German rebels caught with arms in hand, were shot by order of the Polish military authorities in Bydgoszcz...

"The German army entered the town at 8 a.m. on September 5. The proclamation of the German Commander-in-Chief appealed for a restoration of order and normal life, and granted personal safety and protection of property. Immediately after these reassuring promises had been made, a search began of the houses for all boys and men in the age groups 14 to 60; they were made to leave their homes, and were escorted in groups of four, hands above their heads and at the run, to join other groups in various appointed places in the town.

"A large number of these men was elected, completely at random, to be shot. In this way about 5,000 Poles met their death in revenge for about 300 Germans, whose death at the hands of the Polish military authorities was legally justified. Among them all the boys wearing school or boy-scout uniforms. Many school girls and girl-guides were also shot. The choice of Bydgoszcz's youth.

"In fact the number of victims largely exceeded this figure (of 5,000—E.R.), for a few days later the rule of the *Wehrmacht* was succeeded by that of the *Gestapo*, which by November had enforced a system of terrorism and oppression on the Polish population...

"The events at Bydgoszcz were by no means isolated. The 61st Regiment had suffered heavy losses while withdrawing from the region of Brzoza—Nowa Wieś Wielka: for two days

the troops were constantly harassed by armed German bands. The 62nd Regiment of 'Bydgoszcz Lads' was just as heavily attacked by armed diversionary bands near Solec. At 10 p.m. on September 8 an infantry detachment (marching from Wiskitki through Błonie to Warsaw) was shot at by German saboteurs... On September 13 an infantry company, a field artillery battery and baggage wagons were attacked near Gończyce... by heavy machine-gun fire and hand grenades. In the ensuing fight the place was cleared of the enemy and several score of German agents were seized, all wearing civilian clothes... the immensity of the German crimes and German treachery... are as yet difficult to grasp.

"Hitler's criminal maxim: 'When nations are fighting for existence, all words about humanitarianism and ethics count for nought' has been the branding iron applied to the living flesh of the Polish nation and has left on its bleeding, ineffaceable mark.

"The Germans allege that 58,000 of their countrymen were killed by the Poles. Is this figure insinuated by their uneasy conscience and by an instinct for their own safety?

"Are those 58,000 'murdered' Germans necessary in advance for future moral justification, for the world may be shakened by the revelation of the real number of crimes committed by the Germans in Poland..."¹⁴

NOTES

1 "Es ... bleibt der Entschluss ... bei erster passender Gelegenheit Polen anzugreifen..."

(Documents of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, No. L 79: "Bericht über Besprechung am 23. V. 1939.")

2 "Ich habe den Befehl gegeben, und ich lasse jeden füsillieren, der auch nur ein Wort der Kritik äussert, dass das Kriegsziel nicht im Erreichen von bestimmten Linien, sondern in der physischen Vernichtung des

Gegners besteht. So habe ich einstweilen nur im Osten meine Totenkopfverbände bereitgestellt mit dem Befehl unbarmherzig und mitleidlos Mann, Weib und Kind polnischer Abstammung und Sprache in den Tod zu schicken... Polen wird entvölkert und mit Deutschen besiedelt. Mein Polenpakt war nur als Zeitgewinn gedacht... Ich lasse ein paar Kompanien in polnischer Uniform in Oberschlesien oder im Protektorat angreifen. Ob die Welt das glaubt, ist mir scheisseegal. Die Welt glaubt nur an den Erfolg." (Ibid., No. L 3: "Inhalt der Rede an die Oberbefehlshaber und Kommandierenden Generale").

3 "Ich werde propagandistischen Anlass zur Auslösung des Krieges geben, gleichgültig ob glaubhaft. Der Sieger wird später nicht danach gefragt, ob er die Wahrheit gesagt hat oder nicht. Bei Beginn und Führung des Krieges kommt es nicht auf Recht an, sondern auf den Sieg." (Ibid.)

4 "Die polnischen Akte der Provokation sind unerträglich geworden, gleich, wer verantwortlich ist.. Deutschland sei unter allen Umständen entschlossen, diese Mazedonischen Zustände an seiner Ostgrenze zu beseitigen..." (Dokumente der deutschen Politik, Berlin 1942, vol. VII, part 1, p. 226).

5 "Die Deutschen in Polen werden mit blutigem Terror verfolgt ... Eine Reihe von für eine Grossmacht unerträglichen Grenzverletzungen beweist, dass die Polen nicht mehr gewillt sind, die deutschen Reichsgrenzen zu achten. Um diesem wahnsinnigen Treiben ein Ende zu bereiten bleibt nun kein anderes Mittel, als von jetzt ab Gewalt gegen Gewalt zu setzen." (Ibid., p. 281).

6 "British Blue Book on German-Polish Relations" (Sir H. Kennard to Viscount Halifax—Warsaw, August 27, 1939), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Washington 1946, vol. VIII, pp. 452—453.

7 Weltgeschichte der Gegenwart in Dokumenten, Verlag Herder, Freiburg 1956, vol. III, pp. 355—356.

8 Edmund Osmańczyk, Dowody prowokacji (Proofs of Provocation), Czytelnik, Warsaw 1951.

9 "In Gr. Tr. befindet sich die stärkste polnische Minderheit im Kreise Danziger Höhe. Polnische Schule und Kindergarten im Dorf."

10 "Ein derartiger Anschlag auf die Post würde eine erhebliche Unruhe auslösen und kann leicht im Zusammenhang mit anderen Aktionen als von Polen ausgeführt dargestellt werden."

11 "Da man polnischerseits vor allem die d. Genössenschaften bekämpft, würde eine Beseitigung bzw. Zerstörung als Auswirkung dieser Propaganda betrachtet werden".

12 "Grosse moralische Wirkung".

13 K. M. Pospieszalski, ("The case of the 58,000 »Volksdeutschen«"—An investigation into Nazi claims concerning losses of the German minority in Poland before and during September 1939) *Documenta Occupationis*, vol. VII, Western Institute, Poznań 1959, pp. 41—42, (Polish and English text).

14 *Z pierwszej linii frontu* (From the front line) Underground publication of D.I., "Biblioteka Wielkopolska", Warsaw 1943, vol. II, pp. 39—41.

THE TEXT OF THE INSTRUCTION CONCERNING
THE PLANNED PROVOCATION

D 1023 Kommando 10

Objekt Nr D 23

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Gebiet | <i>Nord — Ost</i> |
| 2. Art des Objektes | <i>Neue Pontonbrücke an der Weichsel.</i> |
| 3. Bedeutung des Objektes | <i>Die Brücke ist erst vor wenigen Tagen fertiggestellt worden und ist die einzige Weichselbrücke im Gebiet der freien Stadt Danzig. Die nächste Brücke ist die Dirschauer Brücke, die jedoch in polnischen Besitz ist. Bisher erfolgte der Verkehr ausschliesslich über die verschiedenen Weichselfähren des Freistaates. Die Brücke ist strategisch ausserordentlich wichtig.</i> |
| 4. Nähere Lagebezeichnung: | — |
| 5. Kurze Beschreibung des Objektes: | <i>Pontonbrücke, deren Mittelteil als Schiffedurchlass ausgeschwenkt werden kann.</i> |
| 6. Besitzer | |
| 7. Lageskizze: | <i>Anlage: 1 Skizze.</i> |
| 8. Erforderliche Ladung für Wirkung: | <i>Beabsichtigt ist ein Anschlag der jedoch rechtzeitig verhindert werden wird. Ausführende sind hauptamtl. SS-Angehörige. Wahrscheinlichkeitsfaktor.</i> |
| 9. Verdämmerung: | <i>Nicht erforderlich.</i> |

10. Werkzeuge und Geräte: *Erforderlich ist ein Fischerkahn, ein Seil von etwa 50 m Länge u. ein kräftiger Anker.*
11. Zeit: *Die Ausführung kann nur in der Nacht erfolgen. Am besten in den frühen Morgenstunden, wenn wenig Verkehr besteht.*
12. Besondere Bemerkungen: *Ein Anschlag auf diese Brücke, die erst seit einigen Tagen dem Verkehr übergeben ist und strategisch ausserordentlich wichtig ist, würde eine starke Erregung gegen die pln. Volksgruppe erzeugen.*

TRANSLATION

D 1023 Commando 10

Object No. D 23

1. Area *North—east*
2. Description of object: *New pontoon bridge on the Vistula*
3. The object's importance: *The bridge has been completed recently and is the only bridge over the Vistula within the Free City of Danzig. The nearest bridge, that at Tczew, is in Polish hands. Until recently, crossings of the Vistula within the Free City of Danzig were made by numerous ferries. The bridge is of great strategical importance.*
4. Specific data: *—*
5. Brief description of the object: *Pontoon bridge, the centre part of which is raised to allow passage for ships.*
6. Owner:
7. Positional sketch: *Appendix: sketch.*
8. Explosive required with discharge power: *The planned attempt is to be prevented in time. It will be carried out by SS members.*

9. Preparation: *Unnecessary.*
10. Tools and implements: *Requirements: 1 fishing boat, 1 rope 50 meters long and 1 strong anchor.*
11. Timing: *Execution possible by night only. Early morning hours are best when there is least traffic.*
12. Notes *An attempt to blast the bridge, only recently turned over to public service, and of great strategical importance, will cause strong reaction against the Polish population.*

REVIEWS

A DUTCH HISTORIAN'S SURVEY OF THE GERMAN FIFTH COLUMN

The role played by the German Fifth Column in the period preceding the Second World War and during the war itself has been speculated upon by various writers, ranging from journalists to historians. This subject has generally been treated as a side-issue, usually with reference to the experience of one particular country.

Louis De Jong's book—*The German Fifth Column in the Second World War*¹—is a first attempt at summing up and analyzing the essence of this phenomenon, of its workings and consequences both before and during war-time. The historical and political importance of this study is testified by the fact that it has been written at the special request of the International Council of Philosophic and Humanistic Studies, affiliated to UNESCO.

In order to secure an impartial view of the problem the author—Luis De Jong, Executive Director of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation in Amsterdam based his survey on a wide array of documents. Acknowledgments attached to the English translation of the book contain a list of no less than 21 Institutes and Libraries the author consulted in his search for reliable documentation. The source materials in the Dutch edition cover 35 pages.

¹ Louis De Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War*, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois 1956, translated from Dutch by C. M. Geyl, 330 pages.

The contents of the study fall into three essential parts and an introduction.

The introduction, entitled "The approach of disaster" examines the activities of the Fifth Column before and up to the outbreak of the war—this is what the author calls its "political" function. Alongside the outline of the political events of that period, De Jong evokes the gradual awakening of uneasiness, apprehension, fear and panic among the nations as they came to realize the sinister purpose of the German Fifth Column.

Part I named "Fear" is devoted to an investigation of the Fifth Column's activities in successive countries during war-time—"military" activities, deferring from its peace-time assignments. It contains a description of events and depicts the changing moods—as experiences from within—in all the countries at the time when they were being threatened or already attacked by the Germans. Apart from discussing incidents the author devotes much of his attention to the psychological effect and the emotional implications the possible presence of a Fifth Column exercised on the morale of the assaulted nations, who finally came to regard it as being one of the principal instruments of Hitler's blitz victories.

In Part II entitled "Reality" the author confronts the events, phenomena and feelings described in Part I with the documents supplied by the countries that had been victims of Fifth Column infiltration, and also with available German documents.

Discussing in Part III "Analysis" the existence of the Fifth Column and its political and psychological implications, De Jong points out how the German minorities dispersed throughout the world, had adapted themselves to their surroundings. The general rule seems to have been that in countries with high economic and cultural living standards the Germans easily became assimilated. On the other hand in more backward regions the German settlers preserved their national isolation. According to De Jong this is precisely what happened in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

The degree of assimilation depended equally on yet another factor, namely on the purpose for which the Germans came to settle in any given country. Where they arrived in the guise of conquerors—like the Teutonic Knights—or of privileged colonists, they carefully preserved their notion of being superior to the local population. And on the other hand:

"a deeply rancorous feeling arose among the Slav masses of the population, who had first been *pressed* down and later *kept* down, against the alien 'intruders' and rulers..."¹

"The violence of this feeling—says De Jong—was greatest where nations had in former times had to suffer for a lengthy period, both from the military aggression and from the social and political oppression exercised by the Germans... That was pre-eminently the case in ... Poland."²

These strained relations hampered the assimilation process of hundreds of thousands of members of the German minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary making them an alien and unfriendly body in the country they inhabited.

One cannot help getting the impression that in his analysis of the assimilation process of German minorities particularly in Central Europe, De Jong tends to limit the issue by taking into account too few of the factors which controlled this process in the countries conquered at one time or other by the Germans. Cognizance of Germany's persistently aggressive attitude towards the European East and of her deliberate Germanization policy in conquered territories would help elucidate this problem.

In the German minorities dispersed all over the world Hitler had perceived a potential force which, if incited by skilful propaganda and nationalist ideology, might serve as an instrument in the expansion policy he intended to implement.

¹ L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Ausland-Organisation der NSDAP, with Ernest Bohle at its head, was set up to meet this end.

"National socialism apparently had introduced a new principle, demanding unconditional obedience from every German, wherever he be"—says De Jong.¹

Germans abroad—citizens of the Reich as well as people of German origin—*Volksdeutsche* as Berlin called them, formed groups and organizations that might have different names, but they all rallied round the *swastika* acted according to Nazi slogans, stimulated the development of native fascist groups and finally carried out diversionist actions to harm the country that was their host.

To illustrate better the tasks which members of the German minorities were expected to fulfil it seems worth while to quote Hitler's address to their representatives in Berlin in 1934:

"Gentlemen, you have been entrusted with one of the most essential tasks. You are needed for something more than the fostering and strengthening of the German spirit ... As the front line of our German fighting movement you will make it possible for us to complete the occupation of our position and to open fire ... You will have to mask our own preparations for attack. You must regard yourselves as at war. ...

"... It is a good idea to have at least two German societies in every country. One of them can then always call attention to its loyalty to the country in question, and will have the function of fostering social and economic connections. The other one may be radical and revolutionary. It will have to be prepared to be frequently repudiated by myself and other German authorities ... But it will be your special task to train all Germans, without distinction, unconditionally to place their loyalty to German-dom before their loyalty to the foreign state. Only in this way will you be able to fulfil the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

difficult tasks I shall give you.”¹

In the opinion of De Jong the activities of the Fifth Column assumed their most sinister aspect in the countries where the German minority had preserved its national isolation and where it yielded most to Nazi propaganda. In four countries, namely Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania, the national socialist groups seized political control of the respective German minority associations:

“Four German political Fifth Columns resulted. Two of the states where they operated became the victims of Hitler’s armed aggression: Poland and Yugoslavia.”²

Much of the author’s attention is given to Poland. He describes the structure of the German minority, writes on the subversive activities of a secret organisation accused of fomenting uprisings in Upper Silesia and sentenced by a Polish court at Katowice in 1936, and quotes examples of operations inspired and directed by various cells in Germany.

Wireless transmitters, explosives, arms and ammunition secretly delivered from Germany and found in the homes of members of the German minority in various Polish towns evidenced the connection between the Fifth Column’s activities and its nerve centres in Germany.

German Military Intelligence, the *Abwehr*, instructed members of the German minority how to spread false rumours and defeatist propaganda among the Polish forces. Some members of the German minority had received special training in diversionist operations. On the eve of the war one of these special training camps was operating near Salzburg.

“The Breslau office of the *Abwehr* had further formed and trained a detachment of from three to five thousand Sudeten German national socialists, who slipped over the frontier in civilian clothes during the night before the German offensive

¹ Herman Rauschnig, *Hitler speaks*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1940, pp. 147—9.

² De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

began (some, disguised as coal miners and workers, even a few days earlier) so that they might occupy the most important factories and mines in co-operation with national socialist *Volksdeutschen*. The latter showed the way."¹

In examining the Fifth Column's activities in the Balkan Peninsula, De Jong points to similarities in procedure in Poland and Yugoslavia. Here is an extract from the Yugoslav War Crimes Commission report he quotes in his book:

"Since 1920 they (i.e. the *Volksdeutschen*) had their own national organisation called 'the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*'. It was this organisation (and through it all the Germans in Yugoslavia) that the Nazi party secretly transformed into political and military organs for the attack on Yugoslavia.

Nazi *Gaus* were secretly formed in Yugoslavia and *Gauleiters* appointed. Under the guise of various 'gymnastic' and 'sport' societies, para-military Hitlerite organisations were formed. From the *Reich* there came innumerable 'tourist', 'commercial travellers' and 'relatives', who in fact were only Nazi organizers and instructors."¹

The role played by the Fifth Column in Czechoslovakia is but very briefly mentioned. The importance of its activity is described in the following words:

"Suffice it to say here that the Austrian *NSDAP* and the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* were political Fifth Column groups in the highest measure conceivable. The Austrian *NSDAP* was such from the very outset, the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* became so. Without the activities of these two movements the *Anschluss* of Austria and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in the way in which they occurred are unthinkable."²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154: information supplied by General Lahousen; Leverkühn, *German Military Intelligence* p. 45.

¹ L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 124, *Yugoslav War Crimes Commission Report to the International Military Court, Nuremberg*, vol. XXXIX, pp. 273—274.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 273—274.

Mention is also made of the diversionist operations out in Czechoslovakia by the Special Detachments of the German Security Service (*Einsatzgruppen*):

"They murdered Sudeten Germans there and left bits of Czech uniforms near the corpses, thereby enabling the press of Henlein and Goebbels to make a great outcry about the violent measures President Benes and his associates resorted to."¹

The activities of the military Fifth Column are widely discussed in De Jong's study. In view of the variety of those activities to which the name Fifth Column is currently given—the forming of an adequate definition proves to be a difficult task. The author proposes defining the functions of the military Fifth Column as:

'the rendering of assistance to military aggression by means of internal attack during that aggression.'²

In order to investigate the activities of the military Fifth Column the author examined carefully those German documents which refer to this body and to its functions and which in themselves constitute the weightiest evidence of the Fifth Column's existence and of its workings.

The chapter dedicated to war-time events in Poland contains information on the "Instruction for the troops to be used against Poland"—the so-called *Merklblatt*. According to this document:

"The German groups and also other groups in Poland ... would support the operations of the German armed forces;"³

"... the 'actively fighting sections of the *Volksdeutschen* and other groups of the population' were to know the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44, *Merklblatt zur Bekanntgabe an die gegen Polen eingesetzten Truppen; German Fifth Column in Poland*, London 1941.

distinctive markings and watchwords carefully enumerated in the *Merkblatt*. The markings were to be a red handkerchief with a big yellow circle in the centre, a light blue band for the arm with a yellow centre, a beige overall with yellow tokens or bands for the arm adorned with the *swastika*. The password was to be 'echo', pronounced and written alike in German, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and Czech."¹

Similar documents were found in the Netherlands in the wreck of a German plane, testifying to the Fifth Column's methods having been very much on the same lines in the author's own country as those he described in Poland. Here is an abstract from a battalion order found among these documents:

"In the battle-area German civilians under special orders are in readiness. They are in possession of passes of the accompanying type. They must be given every support they ask for by the troops. Intensive instruction on this point is imperative."²

In his search for full documentation for his study De Jong encountered many obstacles: much of the evidence had been destroyed during the war, witnesses had died and some of the available documents supplied obviously biased information. Hence the author's great caution in his appraisal of the Fifth Column, which nevertheless does not prevent him from confirming the existence of such a body in Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary before the Second World War and further more, from stating that a Fifth Column in its military aspect was operating in Poland and in Yugoslavia during the war.

Wanda Machlejd

¹ L. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

DOCUMENTA OCCUPATIONIS — INFORMATION AND A WARNING

"The case of 58,000 »Volksdeutsche«"

Documenta Occupationis is the title of a serial publication issued since 1945 by the Western Institute—a scientific institution dedicated to the study of Polish-German problems and relations. This publication supplies factual documentation and numerical data of the crimes perpetrated by the Germans in Poland during the Second World War. The introduction to Volume I of the series contains the following statement:

"The handing down of historic documents to posterity is a sacred cause. It imposes obligations of a specific nature on we who were the living witnesses of the greatest of all wars and of a monstrous occupation."

The materials contained in Volume I, were edited by Dr. K. M. Pospieszalski, an authority on the German occupation period and author of several works on this subject, including a treatise published in 1946 *Polska pod niemieckim prawem 1939—1945, Ziemie Zachodnie* (Poland under the German Law 1939—1945, Western Territories). Dr. Pospieszalski is at present lecturer at Poznań University and is the author of the VII Volume of *Documenta Occupationis* issued in the spring of 1959.¹

¹ *Documenta Occupationis*, Western Institute, Poznań April 1959, Vol. VII. "The case of 58,000 »Volksdeutschen«" by Karol Marian Pospieszalski, an investigation into Nazi claims concerning losses of the German minority in Poland before and during September 1939—220 pages, including 76 pages of author's commentary (in Polish and English). Appendix with German documents and a brief summary in Polish and English.

Some of our readers may have heard of the Nazi assertion according to which 62,000 people of German nationality (*Volksdeutsche*) were allegedly murdered in Poland before the outbreak of the war and another 58,000 during the September 1939 campaign. The present work by Profesor Pospieszalski is the first systematic fact-finding survey supported by documents.

According to Nazi propaganda allegations during the September 1939 Campaign the Poles were said to have murdered 58,000 out of the total of 741,000 comprising the German minority domiciles in pre-war Poland. This was asserted in the German official announcement dated February 10, 1940 and in the Nazi Foreign Ministry publication entitled *Dokumente polnischer Grausamkeit* (Documents on Polish cruelty). Official Nazi propaganda presented this slander as being an absolute fact which prompted Roland Freisler, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice of the Third Reich, to pass the following judgement:

"The Polish people have burdened themselves with a terrible dishonour which is unique and indelible... Thus they have shown that they are unworthy of Europe."¹

The German announcement admitted that only 12,857 bodies had been identified, while the remainder were reported missing. Professor Pospieszalski in his survey does not consider it necessary to concern himself with the whereabouts of those missing 48,000—regarding the implication as absurd and quite phantastic, instead he sets out to make a careful investigation of the story behind the 13,000 allegedly identified "victims."

In the first place the author establishes that the very number of "victims" was the result of various propaganda machinations. In September and October 1939 some Nazi newspapers e.g. the *Posener Tageblatt* of October 10 and 14/15, 1939, reported several hundred of the German minority missing from the Poznań Voivodship (in Gniezno District where the *Volksdeutsch*

¹ Freisler, *Das Deutsche Polenstrafrecht*, Deutsche Justiz, 1941, p. 1129, quoted after K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

group was particularly large, only 32 persons were reported missing). In December of that year it was still being reported that the total number of dead and missing Germans in the *Wartheland* was slightly over 2,000, while official announcement of 30. 12. 1939 assessed the total number of German civilian losses in Poland at 5,437 persons. Then—over the following five weeks (until February 10, 1940) the number of allegedly identified victims had been suddenly increased by a further 7,420 persons. The data in support of this sudden increase were stated by the Nazis to be the findings of a specially set up institution: Central Office of Graves... (*Zentrale für die Gräber...*) otherwise referred to as Central Office for Finding and Burying *Volksdeutsche* (*Zentrale zur Auffindung und Bergung Volksdeutscher*).

The archives of this Office having been found in Poland after liberation, Professor Pospieszalski now publishes the result of his own minute investigations and supplies photostat copies of an array of documents, among them a casualty list of Germans serving with the Polish Army during the September campaign, which had been extracted from German files, and a list of civilian *Volksdeutsche* killed during the hostilities.

During his investigations the author established that the Office's files contained a total of 7,004 cards, tallied with the record published by the Germans on February 25, 1942.¹ This total was made up of: 3,453 Germans killed, 2,339 missing and 1,212 reported missing who had returned home or were accounted for in Russian files. Moreover, Professor Pospieszalski supplies evidence to prove that the great majority of those reported killed, had certainly not been "murdered by the Poles." Some secret German documents found in the Office's archives reveal that, at most, several Germans serving with the Polish Army could have been executed, and that the remaining casualties were due to war-time perils suffered by all, to illness or to

¹ K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 and 124.

purely accidental causes. Among the so-called victims of Polish cruelty some had been executed by the Nazis while others were living and doing well. Some were abroad and serving with the Polish Armed Forces as was the case of Ernst Gorzellak, a member of the crew of the Polish destroyer *Błyskawica*, whose name figured on the "missing" list.

Profesor Pospieszalski's investigations throw a side-light onto the methods by which the "German victims" records have been compiled: for instance he found that the record drawn up by the Bydgoszcz Registrar's Office in its final version dated September 8, 1941 contained the figure of 87 "unidentified victims."¹ Why these nameless bodies had been recognized as Germans is the secret of German propaganda working along unscrupulous if primitive lines.

In the light of these revelations it becomes clear that the figure of several thousand Germans allegedly killed or missing in Poland is just not true. The total number of members of the German minority who perished at the hands of Poles during anti-German demonstrations before the war was not more than a few persons. The number of Polish citizens of German nationality executed for espionage, diversionist activities, or for taking part in armed attacks directed against the Polish forces—as was the case at Bydgoszcz—was relatively very small.

Another Nazi calumny refuted in the latest volume of the *Documenta Occupationis* was their accusation that 62,000 members of the German minority had been murdered by the Poles even before war had broken out. According to Hitler's speech of 19. 7. 1940² and to General Gouverneur Hans Frank's Diary³ this mass murder of innocent and helpless Germans was supposed to have taken place immediately before Hitler's

¹ Ibidem, p. 64.

² *Der grossdeutsche*
quoted after K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

³ *Tagebuch*, 1940, III, p. 926.

aggression. Professor Pospieszalski points to the fact that despite putting forward such monstrous allegation, the German authorities did not go to the trouble of holding an official enquiry into the matter, although the legend of the sufferings sustained by the German minority in Poland was used as one of the motives and as an excuse for Hitler's assault.

The Polish author points out that even.

"West German scholars (admit) that the German minority was strongly imbued with Nazi ideology."¹

They formed a firmly established base for every kind of subversion, espionage and sabotage. In a chapter of his work specially dedicated to this problem, Professor Pospieszalski cites many examples of those diversionist activities, but he also impartially admits that in the face of Nazi aggression and of the defeat that followed, the Poles were prone to see subversion where none existed. To quote Ulrich von Hassel², a West German writer on this period, this was an attitude *psychologisch entschuldbar* (psychologically accounted for).

"In conclusion—Professor Pospieszalski writes—it seems fair to say that the number of victims among the German minority in September 1939 resulting directly or indirectly from secret Nazi activities was no higher than 2,000."³

The documentary work carried out by the author, recalls a period which—though closed some years ago—is still apt to stir up grim memories for the Poles. There is one desire and hope shared by our whole nation—never again to be faced with the necessity of going into such a struggle alone—were it ever to be again unleashed by German aggression. Our "psychologically accounted for" sensitivity to this danger, makes us view with foreboding the existence of certain facts mentioned in the latest issue of *Documenta Occupationis* and bearing

¹ K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

² *Vom anderen Deutschland*, Atlantis Verlag, Zurich 1946, p. 92.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

on the present day.¹ The author points to the existence in West Germany of certain quarters where attempts are being made—although in a slightly mollified way—at reviving and spreading the myth of the mass murder of members of the German minority in pre-war Poland.¹ Thus Carl H. Müller Graaf² establishes, with some reservations, the number of German "victims" who perished during the September Campaign, at around 70,000; Gerhard Ludwig³ speaks of 60,000 Germans murdered, a figure cut down by the reviewer of his essay—Reinhardt Wittram, who gives the figure of 16,000. Later he was compelled to diminish his assessment after the Poznań Western Institute demanded justification of his figure. The phantastic figure of 45,000 "missing" Germans kept cropping up in West German literature until 1950 when the matter was dropped. It is regrettable that again the myth of the "Bydgoszcz blood bath" and of other alleged massacres of "innocent Germans" is being revived by the expellee press and by various revanchist publications appearing in the German Federal Republic.

It is to be hoped that the fact-finding survey written by Professor Pospieszalski, with the sound documentation it supplies, will deliver a final blow to this remnant of Nazi propaganda.

Jan Zarański

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 40—41.

² Carl H. Müller-Graaf, *Irrweg und Umkehr*, Stuttgart 1948, p. 175, quoted after K. M. Pospieszalski *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³ Gerhard Ludwig, *Massenmord im Weltgeschehen*, Stuttgart 1951, quoted after K. M. Pospieszalski, *op. cit.*, p. 41.